

GREEN SHEET

Meeting:	December 2-4, 2010, Commission Meeting
Agenda item # 1:	Recreational Fishery for Albacore Tuna – Briefing
Staff Contact:	Michele Culver, Director's Office Region 6 Regional Director
Presenter(s):	Michele Culver, Director's Office Region 6 Regional Director

Background:

Albacore tuna are harvested by 28 nations and managed internationally in the Pacific Ocean by two entities—the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the Western/Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). United States (U.S.) fisheries on the West Coast are managed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) under its Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan.

The north Pacific albacore stock is periodically assessed by the International Scientific Committee (ISC), which is primarily comprised of scientists from the U.S. and Japan. The stock assessment is then reviewed by both IATTC and WCPFC staff members and conservation measures are developed and adopted by these international bodies as appropriate. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), in consultation with PFMC, implements those conservation measures for U.S. fisheries.

During the 2010-12 biennial sportfishing rule-making cycle, the Commission reviewed the current recreational bag limits in place, and adopted new recreational bag limits for species that did not have any limits in place, with the exception of albacore tuna. Because albacore tuna are managed under a federal fishery management plan by PFMC, the Commission decided to defer setting a bag limit for albacore to PFMC.

PFMC has its own biennial management cycle for highly migratory species. It is a three-meeting process with alternatives are developed, considered, and adopted in even-numbered years. Resulting regulatory changes are effective the following year and remain in place until changed.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) held public meetings to develop and discuss alternatives for a recreational bag limit, which were presented to PFMC for consideration. At the Commission meeting, Department staff members will brief the Commission on the range of alternatives, the results of the public meetings, and the decision adopted by PFMC at its November meeting.

Policy issues:

The Commission could consider whether additional conservation measures are necessary for management of albacore tuna.

Public involvement process and outcome:

The Department held three public meetings; on May 26 (Westport), September 1 (Montesano), and October 19 (Olympia) to solicit input on and discuss alternatives for a recreational bag limit for albacore tuna. In addition, PFMC solicited and received public input on the bag limit alternatives at its meetings in June, September, and November. At the Commission meeting, Department staff members will brief the Commission on the nature of the public comments received at all of these meetings.

Action requested:

None—this is a briefing only.

Draft motion language:

N/A

Justification for Commission Action:

N/A

Communications Plan:

N/A

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